



VICTOR EMANUEL NATURE TOURS

ITINERARY

# MIDWEST WARBLERS

## Magee Marsh and Kirtland's Warbler

### MAY 18-26, 2025

©2024



Kirtland's Warbler © Michael O'Brien

*Warblers are among the most popular groups of birds in North America. Their brilliant colors and energetic songs enliven spring mornings throughout much of the continent. This tour will celebrate the diversity of these wonderful birds, in a region that arguably holds the highest warbler abundance anywhere – up to 30 species are likely on this tour!*

*Along Ohio's Lake Erie shoreline lies the legendary Magee Marsh, perhaps the single best location in North America to view migrant warblers. A tiny stretch of woods along the lakeshore concentrates northbound migrants, who stop here to rest and refuel before making the 30-mile crossing to Ontario. Views of birds here can be astounding, with some often just feet away! Our two days here during the height of spring migration should yield a dazzling array of warblers, plus many other songbird migrants including thrushes, flycatchers, vireos, tanagers, and orioles. Nearby Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge compliments Magee nicely, with a good variety of shorebirds, herons, and waterfowl.*

*Before heading to Magee, we'll explore Cuyahoga Valley National Park. Located in eastern Ohio, this park harbors birds more typical of the southern Appalachians, such as Hooded, Cerulean, and Yellow-throated warblers, Acadian Flycatcher, and Wood Thrush.*

*The second phase of our tour takes place in Michigan's Lower Peninsula, home to the endangered Kirtland's Warbler. We'll have three days to explore this wonderful and birdy area and devote at least a full morning to searching for Kirtland's in the young jack pine forests it depends upon. Although Kirtland's will be a central focus, we'll seek many other special breeding birds such as Sedge Wren, Golden-winged, Mourning, and Cape May warblers, Upland Sandpiper, Ruffed Grouse, Eastern Whip-poor-will, and Henslow's Sparrow.. We'll also visit Tawas Point on the shores of Lake Huron. Though not as well-known as Magee Marsh, it can be just as productive for migrant songbirds, and gives us a final opportunity to add a few species to our list.*



**May 18, Day 1: Arrival in Cleveland, Ohio.** Participants may plan to arrive in Cleveland, Ohio any time today, and check in at the airport hotel where a room will be reserved in your name. Please schedule your arrival in adequate time to convene in the hotel lobby at 6:00 p.m. for a trip-welcome and orientation, followed by dinner.

NIGHT: Holiday Inn Express, Cleveland Airport



Yellow-throated Warbler  
© Michael O'Brien

**May 19, Day 2: Cuyahoga Valley NP, Ohio.** On our first morning, we'll travel south from Cleveland to visit Cuyahoga Valley National Park, along the scenic Cuyahoga River. This park, the only national park in Ohio, preserves among the most northerly examples of Appalachian mixed mesophytic forest, a highly diverse broadleaf forest typical of the Southern Appalachians. We'll visit several sites in the park, including the historic Ohio and Erie Canal Towpath Trail, and seek species of a decidedly southern affinity, such as Acadian Flycatcher, Wood Thrush, Louisiana Waterthrush, and Hooded, Prothonotary, Cerulean, and Yellow-throated warblers. After a full morning, we'll head west and finish the day on the shores of Lake Erie at Maumee Bay State Park, where a stroll around the grounds could produce some migrant warblers or sparrows, and nesting Cliff Swallows. After dinner, we'll make an effort to see displaying American Woodcock.

NIGHT: Maumee Bay State Park Lodge and Conference Center, Oregon, OH



**May 20, Day 3: Magee Marsh and Ottawa NWR, Ohio.** We'll have most of two days to explore the Magee Marsh area on Ohio's Lake Erie shoreline. Magee is widely and justifiably regarded as the warbler capital of North America during spring migration. A boardwalk trail through a narrow strip of woods may offer amazing views of migrant songbirds. During mid-May, warbler migration will be at its peak, and we stand a good chance of finding 15-20 species here alone. With a little luck, we'll encounter some of the later migrant warblers, such as Wilson's, Canada, Mourning, and possibly Connecticut, which are rare earlier in the month. Meanwhile, such dazzling beauties like Cape May, Bay-breasted, and Blackburnian are likely sightings. There are other migrants to be seen here as well, such as cuckoos, thrushes, flycatchers, vireos, and orioles, so we'll have plenty to keep us busy! Nearby Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge has a wonderful wildlife drive where we should see a good variety of waterbirds, including Trumpeter Swan, Sora, Common Gallinule, Sandhill Crane, and if water levels are right, numbers of migrant shorebirds. And the forested margins of Ottawa bring us even more possibilities for migrant songbirds. Several fields in this area often harbor a few nesting Henslow's Sparrows, so we'll be sure to look (and listen) for them.

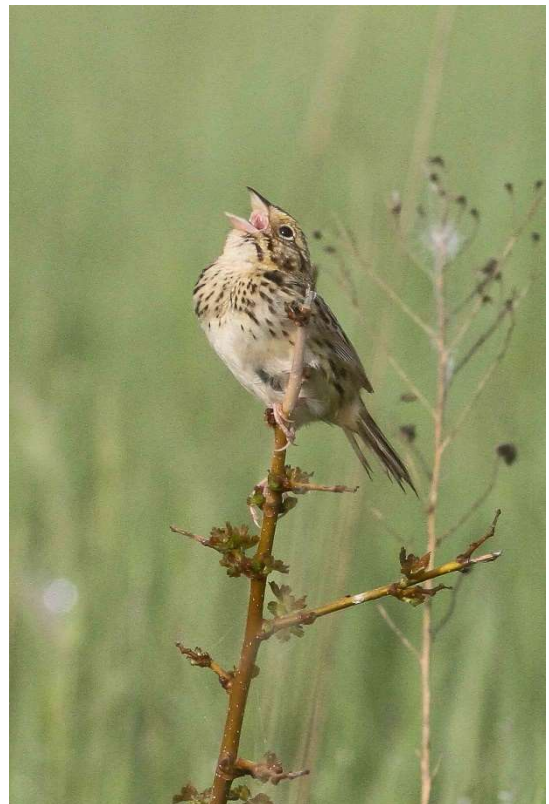
NIGHT: Maumee Bay State Park Lodge and Conference Center, Oregon, OH

**May 21, Day 4: Magee Marsh and Ottawa NWR, Ohio.** We'll have another full morning to explore Magee Marsh and environs, revisiting our favorite spots, and likely checking a few new ones. In the afternoon, we'll make our way west to Ann Arbor, likely making a stop to look for Red-headed Woodpecker.

NIGHT: Holiday Inn Express & Suites, Ann Arbor, MI

**May 22-24, Days 5-7: Michigan's Lower Peninsula.** Our birding in Michigan will begin at the 21,000-acre Waterloo State Recreation Area, the largest park in Michigan's Lower Peninsula. A mosaic of forest, lakes, marsh, and grasslands, Waterloo holds a wide array of bird species. We'll focus our efforts first on an area of mature hardwood forest, home to a thriving population of Cerulean Warblers, along with Blue-winged and Hooded warblers, Ovenbird, and Scarlet Tanager. Nearby grasslands harbor some interesting species, including Sedge Wren, Bobolink, Eastern Meadowlark, and the very local Henslow's Sparrow. By late morning, we'll begin to head north toward Tawas City, stopping en route at Au Sable State Forest where a few Golden-winged and Mourning warblers nest.

We'll have parts of four days to explore the Drift Plains and Northern Lakes and Forest Region of Michigan's Lower Peninsula. Based in the town of Tawas City, we'll be close to many wonderful birding sites, particularly Huron-Manistee National Forest, where Kirtland's Warblers are numerous. We'll devote as much time as necessary to searching for this special bird, which nests exclusively in large, dense stands of young jack pines. A conservation success story, the Kirtland's Warbler was at the brink of extinction in the early 1970s, when populations were estimated to be around 400 individuals. Through intensive habitat management and cowbird control, the population reached 4000 by 2012, though the species' survival remains dependent on conservation efforts.



Henslow's Sparrow © Michael O'Brien



**Golden-winged Warbler © Michael O'Brien**

As we explore the pine-barrens searching for Kirtland's Warblers, we will likely see a few other interesting species, such as Palm and Nashville warblers, Eastern Towhee, Clay-colored and Vesper sparrows, and perhaps even an Upland Sandpiper. In our travels, we will likely visit a boardwalk through boreal forest habitat and search for forest birds such as Ruffed Grouse, Barred Owl, Blue-headed Vireo, Winter Wren, and a long list of warblers, including Canada and Northern Waterthrush. No doubt one of our favorite destinations will be Tawas Point State Park on the shore of Lake Huron, and just minutes from our hotel. Although not as famous as Magee Marsh, Tawas Point can be equally outstanding as a concentration point for songbird migrants, and a frequent magnet for

rarities. Narrow sandy beaches here sometimes hold a number of migrant shorebirds, as well as gulls and terns. Being so close to Tawas Point, we'll have the flexibility to visit here when conditions look best for migrants, and likely visit more than once. Of course, there are countless magical spots in the Lower Peninsula: lakes, ponds, marshes, bogs, and meadows that we will chance upon during our exploration. Some of our favorite moments will likely come from these little treasures. On one evening, we'll do an outing to look for Eastern Whip-poor-will.

NIGHTS: Tawas Bay Beach Resort, Tawas City, MI

**May 25 Day 8: Michigan's Lower Peninsula, back to Detroit.** After another full morning of exploring Michigan's Lower Peninsula, we will make our way back to Detroit by late afternoon.

NIGHT: Courtyard by Marriott Detroit Metro Airport, Romulus, MI

**May 26, Day 9: Departure from Detroit.** Tour participants may make arrangements to depart from Detroit at any time today.

**TOUR SIZE:** This tour will be limited to 14 participants.

**TOUR LEADERS:** Michael O'Brien and Louise Zemaitis



**Michael O'Brien** is a freelance artist, author, and environmental consultant living in Cape May, New Jersey. He has a passionate interest in bird vocalizations and field identification, and a serious addiction to migration and nocturnal birding. His travels have taken him throughout North and Central America and beyond. At home in Cape May, Michael serves as an Associate Naturalist with Cape May Bird Observatory for whom he conducts numerous workshops, and, for many years, conducted a fall songbird migration count. He is co-author of *The Shorebird Guide*, *Flight Calls of Migratory Birds*, and *America's 100 Most Wanted Birds*, and is primary author of *Larkwire*, an online and handheld application for learning bird sounds. His illustrations have been widely published in books and field guides, including the *National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America* and the new Peterson field guides.

Michael also has an intense interest in butterflies, leads several "Birds & Butterflies" tours with his wife, Louise Zemaitis, and is coordinator of the Cape May Butterfly Count.



**Louise Zemaitis** is an artist and naturalist living in Cape May, New Jersey where she is a popular field trip leader teaching birding workshops as an Associate Naturalist with New Jersey Audubon's Cape May Bird Observatory. She also enjoys leading birding groups and lecturing at birding festivals and is known for her enthusiasm for all natural history subjects. Louise and her husband, Michael O'Brien, have been guiding young birders at birding events and conferences for many years. In addition to leading, Louise is field coordinator of the Monarch Monitoring Project in Cape May, served as compiler of the Cape May Christmas Bird Count for over 20 years, and owns Swallowtail Studio at West End Garage in Cape May. An honors graduate of Temple University's Tyler School of Art, she enjoys working as a freelance artist and her illustrations have been widely published. Her proudest

accomplishment has been the raising of her two sons, Bradley, a biologist and artist, and Alec, a philosopher and musician.

**FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS:** The fee for the tour is **\$4,075** per person in double occupancy from Cleveland, Ohio. This includes all meals beginning with dinner on Day 1 to dinner on Day 7, hotel accommodations as stated in the itinerary, gratuities, and guide services provided by the tour leaders. It does not include airfare from your home to Cleveland with return from Detroit, MI, airport departure taxes, alcoholic beverages, special gratuities, phone calls, laundry, or items of a personal nature.

The single supplement for this tour is **\$1,050**. You will be charged a single supplement if you desire single accommodations, or if you prefer to share but have no roommate and we cannot provide one for you.

**REGISTRATION & DEPOSIT:** To register for this tour, please contact the VENT office. The deposit for this tour is **\$500** per person. If you prefer to pay your deposit using a credit card, the deposit must be made with MasterCard or Visa at the time of registration. If you would like to pay your deposit by check, money order, or bank transfer, your tour space will be held for 10 days to allow time for the VENT office to receive your deposit and completed registration form. The VENT registration form (available from the VENT office or by download at <https://ventbird.com>) should be completed, signed, and returned to the VENT office.

**PAYMENTS:** All tour payments may be made by credit card (MasterCard or Visa), check, money order, or bank transfer (contact the VENT office for bank transfer information). These include initial deposits, second deposits, interim payments, final balances, special arrangements, etc. Full payment of the tour fee is due 150 days (December 19, 2024) prior to the tour departure date.

### **CANCELLATION & REFUNDS:**

#### **Cancellation by Participant:**

Refunds, if any, for any cancellation by a participant are made according to the following schedule: If participant cancels 180 days or more before the tour departure date, a cancellation fee of **\$250** per person will be charged unless the deposit is transferred to a new registration for another VENT tour that will operate within the next 12 months from the date of participant tour cancellation, in which case the cancellation fee will be **\$100** per person. If cancellation is made between 179 and 151 days before departure date, the deposit is not refundable, but any payments covering the balance of the tour fee will be refunded. If cancellation is made fewer than 150 days before departure date, no refund is available. This policy and fee schedule also applies to pre- and post-tour extensions. **For participants' protection, we strongly recommend the purchase of travel insurance that covers trip cancellation/interruption.**

If participant cancels:

180 days or more before departure date  
179 to 151 days before departure date

Participant's refund will be:

Participant's deposit minus \$250\*  
No refund of the deposit, but any payments on the balance of the tour fee will be refunded

150 days or less before departure date

No refund available

\*Unless the deposit is transferred to a new registration for another VENT tour that will operate within the next 12 months from the date of participant tour cancellation, in which case the cancellation fee will be \$100 per person. To qualify, cancellation must occur 180 days or more before departure date; deposit transfers must be made at the time of cancellation; and one transfer per deposit.

### **Cancellation by VENT:**

If VENT cancels a tour prior to departure without cause or good reason, VENT will provide the participant a full refund, which will constitute full settlement to the participant.

If VENT cancels or delays a tour or any portion of a tour as a result of any Force Majeure event, VENT will use its reasonable best efforts to refund any payments on the balance of the tour fee to participant; provided that, VENT will have no obligation to provide a participant with a refund and will not be liable or responsible to a participant, nor be deemed to have defaulted under or breached any applicable agreement, for any failure or delay in fulfilling or performing any term of such agreement. A “*Force Majeure*” event means any act beyond VENT’s control, including, without limitation, the following: (a) acts of God; (b) flood, fire, earthquake, hurricane, epidemic, pandemic or explosion; (c) war, invasion, hostilities (whether war is declared or not), terrorist threats or acts, riot or other civil unrest; (d) government order, law or actions; (e) embargoes or blockades; (f) national or regional emergency; (g) strikes, labor stoppages, labor slowdowns or other industrial disturbances; (h) shortage of adequate power or transportation facilities; and (i) any other similar events or circumstances beyond the control of VENT.

This VENT Cancellation & Refunds policy does not apply to air tickets purchased through VENT or to any special arrangements, such as additional hotel nights, that fall outside of the services described in the tour itinerary.

**Victor Emanuel Nature Tours is not a participant in the California Travel Consumer Restitution Fund. California law requires certain sellers of travel to have a trust account or bond. This business has a bond issued by Travelers in the amount of \$50,000. CST #2014998-50.**

**FUEL AND FUEL SURCHARGES:** In the uncertain, often volatile oil market of late, it is difficult – if not impossible – to predict fuel costs over the long term, and more specifically, at the time of operation of this departure. Our prices are based upon the prevailing fuel rates at the time of itinerary publication. While we will do everything possible to maintain our prices, if the fuel rates increase significantly, it may be necessary to institute a fuel surcharge.

**TRAVEL INSURANCE:** To safeguard against losses due to illness, accident, or other unforeseen circumstances, we strongly recommend the purchase of travel insurance as soon as possible after making a deposit. VENT has partnered with Redpoint Travel Protection as our preferred travel insurance provider. Through Redpoint, we recommend its **Ripcord** plan. Designed for all types of travelers, Ripcord is among the most comprehensive travel protection programs available.

Critical benefits of Ripcord include a completely integrated program with a single contact for emergency services, travel assistance, and insurance claims; **medical evacuation from your point of injury or illness to your hospital of choice**; comprehensive travel insurance for trip cancellation/interruption, medical expense coverage, death of pet, and much more. Optional expanded insurance coverage is available and includes items such as evacuation coverage in case of a natural disaster or political or security reasons, waiver for pre-existing medical conditions exclusion, and a “Cancel for Any Reason” benefit. Ripcord is available to U.S. and non-U.S. residents.\*

For a price quote, or to purchase travel insurance, please visit: <https://ripcordtravelprotection.com/ventbird>; or click the **Ripcord** logo on our website (click Help and Trip Insurance); or call +1-415-481-0600. Pricing is based on age, trip cost, trip length, and level of coverage.

\*To be eligible for the pre-existing medical condition exclusion waiver and the optional Cancel for Any Reason (CFAR) upgrade, you must purchase your policy within 15 days of making your first trip payment. The CFAR



benefit provides reimbursement for 75% of covered costs, and increases the policy premium by approximately 50%. Policies may be purchased either for the full value of the tour fee at the time of deposit or in segments as individual tour payments are made (deposit, mid-payment, final balance, additional arrangements, etc.). The “pay as you go” approach reduces up-front expense and ensures that the amount paid toward your full policy premium is in proportion to the amount paid toward the full tour fee. If you choose to “pay as you go,” you must cover each deposit or payment within 15 days, and insure all non-refundable trip cost in order to maintain the CFAR benefit. Please refer to the policy for a full description of coverage.

### **Coronavirus (COVID-19):**

In line with the decision made by the federal government (including the CDC), Redpoint considers COVID-19 illness as any other seasonal respiratory illness. Providing only a positive Covid-19 test result will likely not be considered a covered event per the terms and conditions of the company's policy. Redpoint maintains a **Coronavirus FAQ** page on its website that addresses questions and concerns travelers may have regarding COVID-19 and Redpoint's policy. We strongly recommend that you visit the page for an overview of relevant topics.

Please visit the **Coronavirus FAQ** page at the following link: [https://redpointtravelprotection.com/covid\\_19\\_faq/](https://redpointtravelprotection.com/covid_19_faq/).

**AIR INFORMATION:** Victor Emanuel Travel is a full-service travel agency and wholly owned subsidiary of Victor Emanuel Nature Tours (VENT). Victor Emanuel Travel will be happy to make any domestic or international air travel arrangements from your home and return. Per-person fees apply for each set of travel arrangements: \$50 domestic; \$75 international.\* Many of our travelers choose to make their own air travel arrangements, but we emphasize the benefits to using our services. If you book your air arrangements yourself, Victor Emanuel Travel is unable to provide support in managing any flight delays and/or cancellations that could occur before and during a tour. When you purchase air tickets through Victor Emanuel Travel, our staff has ready access to your air ticket record and can provide assistance as problems arise. Please feel free to call the VENT office to confirm your air arrangements.

\*An air ticket will be purchased by Victor Emanuel Travel on behalf of the traveler with the traveler's consent. A purchase is considered final upon receipt of payment. If a ticket is subsequently reissued at the behest of the traveler (i.e. voluntary change of plans), the same fee rates apply for the reissue process, in addition to any fees that may be charged by the airline.

**CONDITIONS:** Though this will not be a particularly strenuous tour, our days in the field will usually be full, and participants need to be in reasonably good physical condition. There will be **much time spent on foot**, with some walks of two hours or more. Most walking will be on roadsides, boardwalks, or trails, sometimes on uneven ground, such as damp or sandy trails, possibly with roots. We will also do a fair amount of driving on this tour in order to reach the most productive birding areas; the longest drive will be around three hours. To take advantage of peak songbird activity, we will likely get an early start on most days, but balance that with at least an hour break before dinner. A typical day will begin with breakfast around 5:30 or 6:00 a.m. followed by a full day in the field. Evening outings will be offered on at least one or two nights.

**Special Note:** On some tours and in certain areas, the larger 15-passenger vans are not available. Every effort will be made to secure the larger vehicle for this tour. However, when smaller vans are reserved, participants will not always have a window seat and you will be asked to rotate daily.

**CLIMATE:** Spring in the Upper Midwest is a pleasant time of year, typically with cool to mild days and chilly nights. We can expect daytime highs to be in 60's or 70s, with nighttime lows in the high 30s to low 50s. Wind speed and direction will play a role in our comfort level; if a north wind is blowing off the lake, we should expect it to feel chillier. Rain is always a possibility.

**CLOTHING:** Dress will be informal throughout. We recommend a couple pairs of pants, several t-shirts, and several long-sleeved shirts. Many outdoor stores carry the designer clothing that many travelers now favor. This includes shirts and pants made of light but durable material, well ventilated, and with numerous pockets. **You should definitely bring a few items of heavier clothing in the event of our encountering cold and/or wet**

**weather.** Examples of items of this nature include flannel shirts, down or fleece sweaters, and a warm, waterproof jacket. For footwear, light hiking boots or trail-walking shoes are adequate. Rubber boots are cumbersome to lug around and not practical on this tour, but since wet weather is a possibility, you may wish to bring Gore-tex shoes or “Neos” overshoes. A hat for protection from the sun is essential. A pair of lightweight gloves is also recommended. Please be advised that laundry facilities are available at all of our accommodations, but time to do laundry will likely be limited.

**BAGGAGE:** As space in the vehicles is limited, please restrict your luggage to one medium-sized suitcase and one carry-on bag. Soft-sided bags are much preferred as they pack much more easily.

**EQUIPMENT:** As this is a nature tour, you will want to bring your binocular, first and foremost. Many people like to bring their own spotting scopes. This is fine and acceptable, but be aware that your tour leaders will have their personal scopes available for group use, and scopes will likely be of limited use at many birding sites. Sunglasses and sunscreen are essential, as the sun can be intense, even in the spring. A wide-brimmed hat is also recommended for sun protection. We are likely to encounter mosquitos at some point, so insect repellent is recommended. Some sort of travel alarm clock or cell phone alarm is essential. Either a small travel umbrella or rain jacket is essential in the event we encounter rain. Because we’ll be spending a good bit of time on foot, some participants may wish to bring a collapsible walking stick, or possibly a portable fold-up travel chair. A camera is recommended for scenery shots or chance bird photography. However, if you are a serious bird photographer, please be aware that excessive camera gear or bulky, hard-framed camera cases are not appropriate for this tour.

**HEALTH:** VENT follows Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations for standard travel precautions, which includes vaccination against a variety of preventable diseases. Among these so-called Routine Vaccinations are measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) vaccine, diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus (DPT) vaccine, poliovirus vaccine (boosters for adult travelers), and Varicella (Chickenpox). You should also be up-to-date with Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B vaccinations.

If you are taking personal medication, prescription or over-the-counter, be sure to bring an ample supply that will allow you to get through the tour safely. Please consult your physician as necessary. Remember to pack all medication in your carry-on baggage, preferably in original containers or packaging. As airline baggage restrictions can change without warning, please check with your airline for procedures for packing medication.

**COVID-19:** We continually emphasize that our number one priority is the health and safety of our customers and employees. Although VENT no longer maintains any of its COVID-era prevention protocols, we strongly recommend best practices for protecting yourself and your fellow travelers against COVID-19 illness. These measures include receiving the primary series vaccinations for those eligible, staying “Up to Date” with COVID-19 booster shots, wearing high filtration N-95 or KN-95 masks when in airports and on airplanes, and avoiding risky social settings in the lead-up to your tour. These recommendations are firmly rooted in CDC guidance regarding recommendations for avoiding COVID-19.

**Insect Repellents** – There are insect repellents for the skin and an insect repellent used to treat clothing that should not be applied to the skin.

Insect repellents for the skin are commonly available in three forms:

- DEET (N,N-diethyl-meta-toluamide): A chemical compound that is marketed under various brand names (OFF!®, Cutter™, Ultrathon™, etc.) and offered in a variety of formulations including sprays, lotions, time-release preparations, and disposable wipes. The formulations will state a percentage of the active ingredient DEET on the packaging. DEET may be applied to exposed skin directly and/or sprayed on clothing. Please be careful when applying DEET as it can damage plastics and lens coatings.
- Picaridin: A synthetic formulation that is derived from piperine, a substance found in plants that produce black pepper.



- Herbal insect repellents: Various mixtures of organic ingredients such as oils from eucalyptus, citronella, cedar, and other herbs. The herbal repellents are more difficult to categorize because of the difference in ingredients from one brand to another. There is considerable variation in their effectiveness.

An insect repellent for clothing is marketed in one approved formulation:

- Permanone® (Permethrin) is an odorless spray-on repellent that may be used for **pre-treatment** of clothing, gear, and tents. It should not be used directly on the skin or sprayed on clothing while it is being worn. The pre-treatment process requires a number of hours to complete and must be done outdoors, so is best completed in advance of travel. Do-it-yourself pre-treatment has to be repeated more often than commercial treatment using Insect Shield® technology. It is available at various outdoor stores and can easily be found online.
- Insect Shield® apparel: Clothing pre-treated with Permanone is made by a variety of manufacturers. It is available for purchase from some sporting goods suppliers. The clothing is advertised as retaining its repellency for up to 70 washings.

The US EPA offers a search tool to help choose a repellent that is best for a particular situation. For example, some repellents work for mosquitoes, but not for ticks.

<https://www.epa.gov/insect-repellents/which-insect-repellent-right-you>

In addition to your physician, a good source of general health information for travelers is the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, which operates a 24-hour recorded Travelers' Information Line (800) CDC-INFO (800-232-4636). You can check the CDC website at <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel>. Canadian citizens should check the website of the Public Health Agency of Canada: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health.html> (click on Travel Health).

**SUGGESTED READING:** A number of traditional booksellers and online stores list excellent inventories of field guides and other natural history resources that will help prepare you for this tour. We recommend [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) which has a wide selection; [www.buteobooks.com](http://www.buteobooks.com) and [www.nhbs.com](http://www.nhbs.com) which specialize in ornithology and natural history books; and [www.abebooks.com](http://www.abebooks.com) for out-of-print and hard-to-find titles.

### ***Birds:***

Any of the following guides are excellent choices for this tour:

Kaufman, Kenn. *Kaufman Field Guide to the Birds of North America*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2005.

National Geographic Society. *Field Guide to North American Birds*. Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society, 7<sup>th</sup> edition, 2017.

Sibley, David Allen. *The Sibley Guide to Eastern Birds: Second Edition*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2016. (A more portable version of the larger Sibley Guide, covering only eastern birds. Probably the best guide for this tour.)

Sibley, David Allen. *The Sibley Guide to Birds*. Second Edition. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014. (A large book, but arguably the best North American field guide, with the most complete and accurate ID information.)

### ***Bird References:***

Dunn, Jon, and Kimball Garrett. *A Field Guide to Warblers of North America*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997. (The most authoritative and useful treatment of warblers, with comprehensive coverage of identification, aging, sexing, and subspecies.)

Ehrlich, Paul R., et. al. *The Birder's Handbook: A Field Guide to the Natural History of North American Birds*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988. (An excellent reference guide, full of essays and information about North American Birds.)

Kaufman, Kenn. *Lives of North American Birds*. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1996. (An excellent and underrated resource to the natural history of North American birds.)

Stephenson, Tom, and Scott Whittle. *The Warbler Guide*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013. (A large book, profusely illustrated with photos, and excellent treatment of warbler sounds.)

***Mammals:***

Reid, Fiona. *Peterson Field Guide to the Mammals of North America*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, Fourth Edition, 2006.

***Butterflies:***

Brock, Jim P. & Kaufman, Kenn. *Butterflies of North America*. New York, NY. Houghton Mifflin Company, 2003.

***Trees:***

Petrides, George A. *Peterson Field Guide to Eastern Trees*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1988.

***Suggested Aps:***

*Merlin Bird ID* by Cornell Lab. Cornell University. Highly recommended! This free download from the App store is a remarkable machine-learning ID tool to help birders of any skill level identify birds through sound ID, photo ID, or based on a few simple questions. ID text and audio recordings included for more than 10,000 species worldwide. Free “Bird Packs” need to be downloaded for each region.

**TIPPING:** Tipping (restaurant staff, porters, drivers, local guides) is included on VENT tours. However, if you feel one or both of your VENT leaders or any local guides have given you exceptional service, it is entirely appropriate to tip. We emphasize that tips are not expected and are entirely optional. Tips should be given directly to your tour leader; they should not be sent to the VENT office.

**RESPONSIBILITY STATEMENT:** Victor Emanuel Nature Tours, Inc., a Texas corporation, and/or its agents (together, “VENT”) act only as agents for the participant in regard to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, or airplane and assume no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity which may be occasioned either by reason of defect in any vehicle or for any reason whatsoever, or through the acts or default of any company or person engaged in conveying the participant or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. VENT accepts no responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in airfare or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, terrorism, or other causes. All such losses or expenses will be borne by the participant, as tour rates only provide for arrangements for the time stated.

VENT reserves the right (i) to substitute hotels of similar category, or the best reasonable substitution available under the circumstances, for those indicated and (ii) to make any changes in the itinerary that are deemed necessary by VENT or which are caused by third party transportation schedules (i.e. railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, airplane, etc.).

VENT reserves the right to substitute leaders or guides on any tour. Where VENT, in its sole discretion, determines such substitution is necessary, it will notify tour participants.

VENT reserves the right to cancel any tour prior to departure with or without cause or good reason. See the VENT Cancellation & Refunds policy set forth above.

Tour prices are based on tariffs and exchange rates in effect on October 20, 2024, and are subject to adjustment in the event of any change thereto.

VENT reserves the right to decline any participant’s Registration Form and/or refuse to allow any participant to participate in a tour as VENT deems reasonably necessary, in its sole discretion. VENT also reserves the right to remove any tour participant from any portion of a tour as VENT deems necessary, in its sole discretion, reasons for such removal include but are not limited to, medical needs, injury, illness, inability to meet physical demands of a tour, personality conflict or situations in which such removal is otherwise in the best interest of the tour, the

tour group and/or such participant. A participant may also voluntarily depart from a tour. If a participant is removed from a tour or voluntarily departs from a tour, such participant will be responsible for any expenses associated with such removal or departure, including but not limited to, transportation, lodging, airfare and meals, and VENT will have no obligation to refund or reimburse any such removed or departed participant for any tour payments or deposits previously paid by such participant.

Baggage is carried at the participant's risk entirely. No airline company, its employees, agents and/or affiliates (the "***Airline***") is to be held responsible for any act, omission, or event during the time participants are not on board the Airline's aircraft. The participant ticket in use by any Airline, when issued, will constitute the sole contract between the Airline and the purchaser of the tickets and/or the participant. The services of any I.A.T.A.N. carrier may be used for VENT tours, and transportation within the United States may be provided by any member carrier of the Airlines Reporting Corporation.

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